

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 4 and 40-43 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend the claims as shown below:

Claims 1-4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): An isolated polynucleotide comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID No. 1.

Claim 6-8 (cancelled)

Claim 9 (previously presented): An isolated polynucleotide sequence which encodes a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No. 2.

Claims 10 and 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (original): An Escherichia coli strain DH5amcr/pEC-XK99EsigMal<sub>ex</sub> deposited as DSM 14409.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): A method for the production of L-amino acids in coryneform bacteria, comprising:

a) fermenting, in a medium, the coryneform bacteria producing the desired L-amino acid, in which bacteria at least the endogenous sigM gene or nucleotide sequences coding therefor are enhanced.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 13, further comprising:

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